

KANSAS CITY DISTRICT'S NEWS MAGAZINE

HEARTLAND ENGINEER



AUGUST 2006

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EMERGENCY OPERATIONS



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Increased readiness for the Corps
means change for the
Kansas City District

FEATURES



Vira Dobbins (left) representative of Federal Employees Union Local 29 and Col. Michael Rossi, district commander, sign a memorandum of understanding which ends Quarterly Air Quality Monitoring within the Richard Bolling Federal Building. Signed July 6, the memorandum allows the district to spend the funding formerly used for air testing in other areas, benefitting district employees. *Photo by Eric Cramer*

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PEOPLEPOWER

Christine Hendzlik received the Project Manager of the year Award from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



LASTWORD

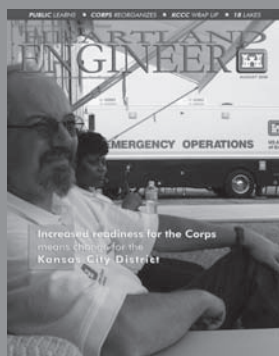
Following a rigorous analysis after the devastating flooding of the Gulf coast, Lt. Gen. Carl Strock responds.



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ON THE COVER:

Dave Hoover (left), emergency management specialist, sits outside the Deployable Tactical Operating System (DTOS) during his deployment in response to Hurricane Dennis in 2005. Hoover worked with employees from other districts within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at a mobilization center in Alabama. New for 2006, the Corps has reorganized its response to emergency management in order to better serve the customer.

Standards Standards Standards

When I first came into the Army, I was assigned to the 23rd Engineer Battalion in Hanau, Germany--fresh out of my basic course and Ranger School. I was a bundle of energy and gorging myself at the “all you can eat buffet,” of new experiences. Three months in, I’d already been to the East German border to visit our Cold War battle lines, through three weeks of force-on-force evaluations and numerous no-notice alerts and roll-outs. I was having the time of my life, but the Army and I were “cowboy-ing” it in the mid-’80s—sometimes making up for knowledge and standards with energy and bravado.

Now, the Army at that time was still in the mode of “white glove” and “zero defects” inspections by the Inspector General. They told you they were “here to help,” but we all knew better, and the specter of a career ending mistake—even a puny career like mine—loomed large. So six months in, I’d been delegated responsibility to ensure Delta Company maintenance; supply and mess hall were all ready for the IG. We didn’t just take this inspection in stride, either. We stopped all actions for about a month to focus effort and sweat. Fresh paint, detailed auditing of all paper work, countless hours over the maintenance pits for every track, truck, and tank. I busted my hump. Only thing is, that with maintenance and supply being so overwhelmingly complex and difficult, I’d paid almost no attention to the mess hall. The big week came and went—we took our bruises, but didn’t hit the canvas. Results: maintenance, pass (barely); supply, pass (barely); mess hall, pass (no deficiencies!).

That next week, I was having breakfast in the mess hall and my battalion commander was at the table, Lt. Col. John Morris (who subsequently commanded the Buffalo District). I asked the boss what lesson I was to take from the inspection preparations and results—perhaps that the best technique would have been for me to ignore all the areas, since the mess hall had done so well. He laughed and said not quite. He said, unlike maintenance and supply (and training and admin), the dining facility personnel in the 23rd had always been straight. They adopted high standards years ago and ALWAYS stuck to them—the one Army standard in every aspect of their duties and operations. They had been “right” for so long that all the new Soldiers who came to work in the mess hall were taught ONLY ONE WAY to do things, the RIGHT WAY. They didn’t even know how to do a task wrong: they never were exposed to it, so there were no bad habits to break.

The lesson stuck with me the next 23 years. Define the standard, make it part of the unit culture and stick to it hell-or-high-water. Sometimes it’s convenient to fudge on the standard because of the crush events—when we do, our units, our Soldiers, our great Corps’ civilians suffer. They begin to learn the easier wrongs instead of the harder rights. The Army’s come a long way since the early ’80s, and maintaining high STANDARDS is now its hallmark.

For us in recent years, we’ve been continually bending our district culture towards setting and maintaining high standards in our processes. The district’s ISO efforts in Engineering and Project Management, our Working Program & Budget Advisory Committee and Program & Budget Advisory Council process, aggressive schedule management in our construction offices, Individual Development Plan and process templates and future ISO certification as part of our Contracting Campaign Plan, and our emphasis on standards and certification as Project Management Professionals (PMPs), just touch the surface.

At a world-wide engineer convention earlier this year, an Army captain approached me and asked me if I was the Mike Rossi who commanded the 65th. He then told me he had served in the 101st Airborne Division, one of our stateside peer units, and that he absolutely craved getting new sappers who came from the 65th. With a certain amount of salty flair, he told me they were always sharp and fit, always knew and executed the Army standard and knew their “stuff.” It was the best compliment I ever received—one about my unit and my people.

As some of you go on deployments and seek promotions and opportunities in other U.S. Army Corps of Engineers districts, I know I’ll get the same compliment sometime down the road. We’re building it right, and you’re the reason. Thanks for all you do and keep setting the standard.

Hooah!

Colonel Mike Rossi




COL Michael A. Rossi

OPM TO RECONSIDER DENTAL VISION CONTRACT BIDS

A recent decision by the Office of Personnel Management to reassess bids on a new dental and vision benefit has left the insurance providers that won the initial contract awards on hold.

OPM officials said July 3, however, that despite this obstacle, federal employees will not see a delay in the new benefit. Dental and vision coverage still will be available as of Nov. 13, when the annual open season for federal health insurance begins, an agency spokesman said. By law, OPM has to offer the new benefits by the end of the calendar year.

After awarding 10 contracts to insurance companies in May to offer the supplemental insurance, which is voluntary and does not include any government subsidy, OPM sent a letter June 7 informing the providers that it is redoing the contracting process.

The decision to reconsider bids came after Blue Cross Blue Shield of America's Federal Employee Program, the largest provider in the OPM-run Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, only was given a contract to offer the vision benefits.

"OPM is undertaking this step both to reaffirm the integrity of the procurement process and to put OPM in the best possible position to provide federal employees and annuitants access in the upcoming open season to high-quality, reasonably priced dental and vision benefits," the letter said, which a spokeswoman from the one of the insurance companies, GEHA, read to Government Executive.

Blue Cross Blue Shield filed a protest with the Government Accountability Office in May, which it dropped once OPM announced it would reopen the bidding process.

"We are all glad that they're looking at it again, revisiting it," a spokeswoman for the insurance provider said. "And [that they] can be more transparent about it. Everyone benefits."

The OPM spokesman said agency officials "listened to Blue Cross Blue Shield and that was instrumental in us moving forward to take another look at the process." But he could not comment on the specific reason for re-examining the bids because of the open procurement process. No new companies will be allowed to submit bids in this second round.

Until OPM makes a decision, the companies that did receive the dental contract in the first go-round -- MetLife, GEHA, United Concordia, Aetna, GHI, CompBenefits and Triple-S -- are on hold.

Karen Schuler, a spokeswoman for GEHA, said the company still is working internally to prepare to offer the dental benefits by November.

"GEHA is disappointed in the delay but we understand that it is necessary to eliminate any uncertainty about the results of the selection process," Schuler said. "We are anxiously awaiting word from OPM to begin the implementation process."

Ilene Margolin, a spokeswoman for GHI, said the company is "committed to pursuing this and [expects] that we will be able to increase the service we provide to federal employees."

Aetna released a statement that the company "remains committed to helping federal enrollees achieve good oral health and overall health," and Peyton Hamrick, the marketing director for United Concordia, said her company would not comment on an ongoing procurement process.—*Karen Rutzick, GovExec.com*

AGENCY GETS IRAQ CONTRACTING ASSIGNMENT

Less than a year after its creation, the Pentagon's Business Transformation Agency has been assigned the task of streamlining and transforming the Defense Department's contracting processes and systems in Iraq.

Paul Brinkley, Defense deputy undersecretary for business transformation and co-director of the BTA, will lead the Task Force to Support Improved DoD Contracting and Stability Operations in Iraq, using BTA resources and reporting to Gordon England, the deputy secretary of Defense.

"One of the things we have learned at BTA is that there are two sets of processes in associated business systems ... processes for peace-time operations ... and another set of requirements when you go into a war zone," Brinkley said in an interview.

In this new role, the task force is expected to provide recommendations and implementation plans for a variety of Defense contracting policies and procedures in Iraq, but will not be responsible for awarding contracts. Ultimately, the creation of the task force is aimed at accelerating the reconstruction and stability operations within Iraq.

Brinkley said about a dozen government employees and industry personnel serving with the BTA as consultants will be assigned to the task force.

"Your business processes need to be much more nimble to make sure that the mission that is being undertaken is being supported," Brinkley said. "What we're finding is that there is nothing that officially needs to be relaxed ... while the law and regulations allow

that [flexibility] ... our systems have not been designed for that capability."

The task force will make recommendations in areas including the deployment of common systems and business processes for contract management in Iraq, possible structural changes to the Pentagon's contracting authorities and potential changes to the Federal Acquisition Regulation and the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulations Supplement. The recommendations must be submitted to England for final approval, according to a June 22 memorandum released July 6.

Brinkley said the task force will publish a report every three months.

With Brinkley heading up the task force, England wrote that Thomas Modly, Defense deputy undersecretary for financial management and co-director of the BTA, will have additional responsibilities for handling the day-to-day operations of the agency.

In a separate memorandum dated June 26, Brinkley and Modly outlined a series of personnel and organizational changes for the BTA, including the termination of its Information and Federation Strategy Directorate, the appointment of BTA personnel to the task force and a reorganization of BTA senior leadership.

Stan Soloway, president of the Professional Services Council, a trade association that represents some of the contractors in Iraq, said the creation of the task force makes sense and is consistent with recommendations PSC compiled with the Army in late 2004 for improving contracting in Iraq.

"One of the main recommendations we had was the need to synthesis the various policies and laws," Soloway said. "A lot of the authorities and rules are scattered."

He said there is a wealth of information on how to improve contracting in Iraq and he hopes the task force's efforts do not "amount to a lot of reinventing the wheel."

"This cannot be done in the vacuum of the BTA," Soloway said. They need to have the industry at the table. Planning needs to involve those who need to be executing. And I have no reason to believe that the BTA does not believe that."

Stuart Bowen, the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction, said last month that corrupt contracting practices and fraud no longer are a major factor in Iraq, in part due to a program of aggressive oversight by his 50 auditors, inspectors and investigators in the Baghdad office.—*Daniel Pulliam, GovExec.com*

Project Manager of the Year

PEOPLEPOWER



She has worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for 22 years and is involved with several different projects, and she was recently selected as the first Project Manager of the Year.

Christine Hendzlik, a registered Professional Mechanical Engineer, was nominated by Bill Waugh, former chief of Military Programs, before he left the Corps to become the new director of installation support at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

"This was the first time they've given this award," Hendzlik said. "So when I found out about it, the 'wow' factor went up. I appreciate how Bill nominated me, and it's quite humbling when you think about it because now I've got a lot to live up to."

Being named Project Manager of the Year will mean several things for Hendzlik, one of which is an assignment to the Project Management Community of Practice for the next two years.

"I also get to attend the awards banquet at the Senior Leaders Conference in San Diego," Hendzlik said.

Waugh nominated Hendzlik because she has "executed a variety of challenging, complex military projects in an outstanding manner for a variety of military customers in the past year."

Her projects include the Lewis and Clark Center, the Regional Confinement Facility, the Battle Seminar Facility, utility privatization contracts and large Operations and Maintenance projects such as the Red Team University and Battle Lab projects.

"In every case, Christine's leadership and management efforts produced exceptional results," Waugh said. "She is an extremely talented engineer with an incredible work ethic."

The Lewis and Clark Center is currently Hendzlik's largest project at the moment.

"The college is impressive," Hendzlik said. "I've been working on it since 2001 and variations of it before that. I love working on this project, and I love working in the field. I've been out here for two years now working on this as my primary focus."

Hendzlik said this was the first time the district actually assigned a project manager to the field as a project manager.

"I think it's worked out really well," Hendzlik said. "The construction guys say they like having me out here because I hear about problems before they actually become major problems, and we can usually work out how we're going to handle it. I'm learning about the day-to-day construction administrative aspects, too, and I think it's helped me become a better project manager. I would advocate this for every single PM in the district, actually, because if you're out there, you can understand how your actions during the life of the design phase can seriously impact your ability to manage a contract during construction."

Hendzlik's actions not only impact her projects, they also impact the district.

"In recognition of her outstanding performance and leadership abilities, Christine was selected to lead the district's Leadership Development Program," Waugh said. "She has already had a wonderful influence with the program, coordinating and executing a variety of formal and informal leadership and management training sessions and field trips. Her role requires a tremendous amount of time, given her other responsibilities, and her willingness to run the program demonstrates her commitment to the district and its employees."

PEOPLEPOWER

People Power is a monthly column designed to highlight the outstanding accomplishments or human interests of a district employee. Supervisors and peers are encouraged to nominate team members to be featured in an upcoming issue of *Heartland Engineer*.

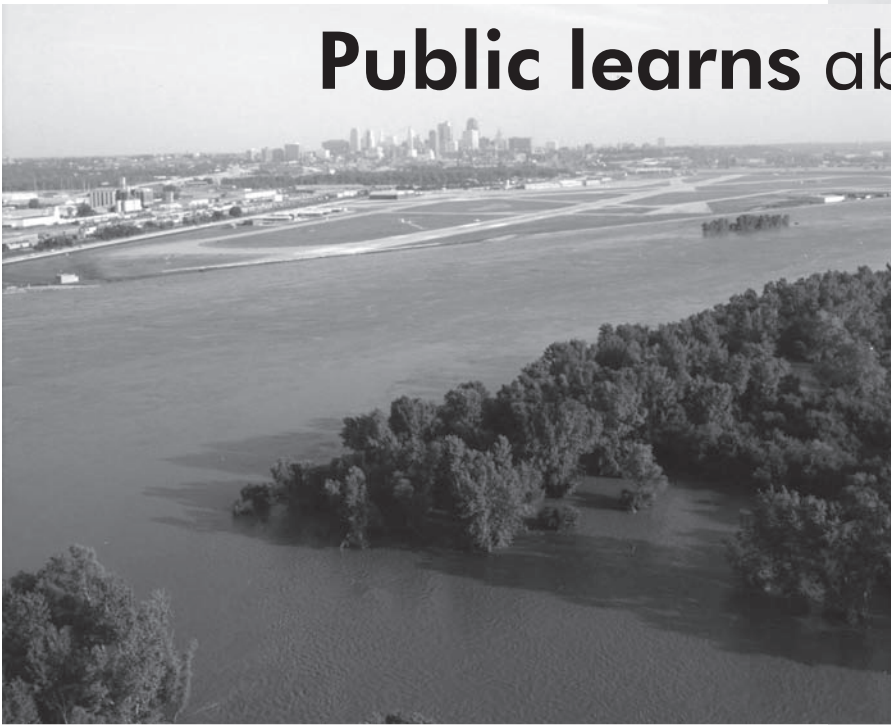
Nominations should include a brief summary of the nominee's accomplishment and contact information for the person submitting the nomination. Nominations should be submitted by the 15th of the month for consideration for the next issue.

Nominations should be sent to:

PEOPLEPOWER
c/o Public Affairs Office
700 Federal Building
601 East 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106
or e-mailed to:
thomas.a.ohara@usace.army.mil



Public learns about Kansas City levee plans



This view over the Charles B. Wheeler Downtown Airport shows the performance of Kansas City levees during the large flood in 1993. A July 13 public meeting discussed the 20 miles of area levees and an environmental impact statement on their improvement to modern standards.

Photo by Eric Cramer

By Eric Cramer

About 50 Kansas City metro area residents received information about an environmental impact statement and feasibility study addressing the seven levee projects in the Kansas City area at a meeting July 13 in the Jack Reardon Center, Kansas City, Kan.

Experts from the Kansas City District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, made a formal presentation regarding the levee projects and answered questions at a series of displays picturing each levee district, and listened to comments from the audience.

"This is one of the best opportunities for us to hear your concerns," David Combs, chief of the Kansas City District's planning division, said to those present. "It also allows us to complete our documentation required by the NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) process."

Lamar McKissack, project manager for the levee study, said the Kansas City levee systems extend over a 20 mile east and west axis, and nine miles north and south.

"There are 32 square miles of industrial, commercial and residential development behind the levees. About 90,000 people work in the protected area," McKissack said. "These levees were designed to function as a system, and there's good coordination of effort between all the levee districts."

"I've worked a lot with the Corps, and they know what they're doing. We agree totally with what they're doing on the project."

- Donald Richmond, Bayer Crop Science

McKissack said the Kansas City Levees also protect road and rail assets of national importance.

He said the Corps is authorized to review the levee system under Section 216 of the 1970 Flood Control Act.

The levee units addressed at the meeting included the Argentine, Armourdale, Fairfax-Jersey Creek, Central Industrial District, North Kansas City, Northeast Industrial District and Birmingham levee units.

The Corps' review of these levees showed room for improvement in some areas, based on past performance and recent analysis. The study recommends improved

under-seepage control of levees in the Harlem and National Starch areas on the lower section of the North Kansas City Levee Unit and on the East Bottoms levee section near the confluence of the Blue and Missouri rivers.

Studies also recommend strengthening a floodwall and reconstructing a retaining wall in the Fairfax-Jersey Creek unit. Along the Kansas River, the study recommends raising the levees about five feet in the Armourdale and Central Industrial District (Kansas) and in the Argentine.

A time line for project authorization depends on headquarters review, but a final decision on the recommendations should be signed by December.

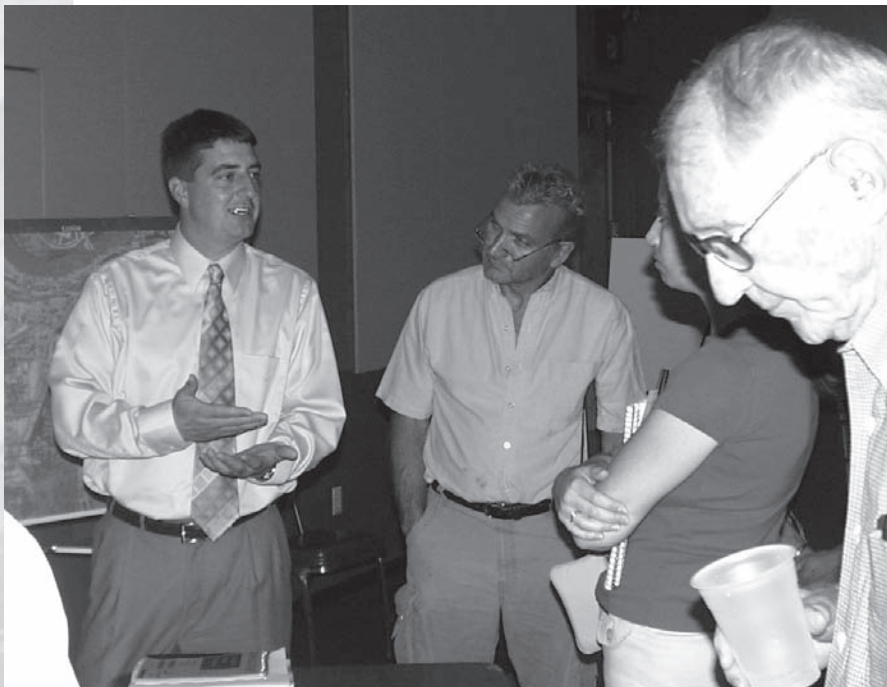
Members of the public commenting at the meeting had praise for the Corps' efforts, and suggestions for the levee system.

Randy Niere, of the Missouri Bicyclists Association, urged the development of more bicycle trails and better public access to area streams. "Missouri and Kansas rivers have been sequestered from public participation," he said.

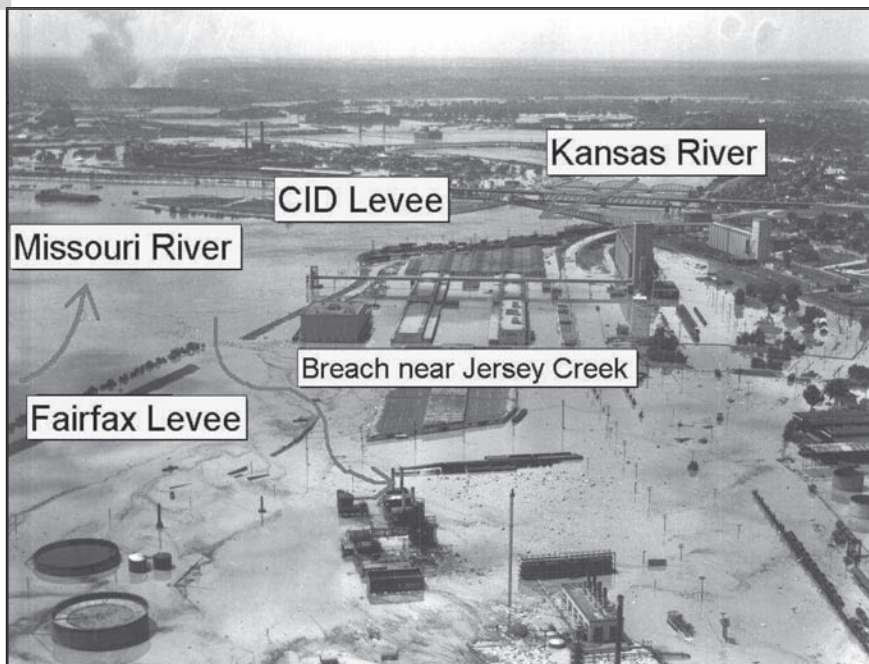
Several other members of the public spoke calling for improved access and more recreational use of the rivers.

Donald Richmond, of Bayer Crop Science, said his company's North Kansas City facility is bounded by levees on two sides.

"I've worked a lot with the Corps, and they know what they're doing," Richmond said. "We agree totally with what they're doing on the project."



Kansas City District expert Eric Shumate (left) discusses the Argentine Levee Unit with Lonny Weaver, who owns a business in Kansas City's Argentine district. About 50 people attended a meeting to learn about proposed changes to the Kansas City flood damage control system. *Photo by Eric Cramer*



A 1951 photo shows levee breaches on Kansas City levees in the Fairfax-Jersey Creek and Central Industrial District levee units. Upgraded during the 1960s, the levees performed well in the 1993 flood and are slated for further improvements.

Photo by Eric Cramer



CORPS

reorganizes to increase readiness

Drivers park their trucks at the mobilization center, waiting to be given further guidance. The drivers will take their loads of bottled water to commodity teams at staging areas throughout the impacted state. *Photo by JoAnn Lucas*

By *Diana McCoy*

The Kansas City District is now one of two national water planning and response teams, a change prompted by the lessons learned since the 2004 hurricane season.

In recent times when response to emergency operations was of the utmost importance, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has reorganized in order to streamline the process and better meet the customer's need.

Each federal agency is assigned a specific mission during a national emergency scenario, and the Corps' mission is to provide potable water, ice, power restoration for response missions and debris removal and temporary roofing and housing for recovery missions. To the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Corps is known as Emergency Support Function-3 (ESF-3).

"Every district was assigned one type of team which would respond to a FEMA mission," said Paul Flamm, chief of the Kansas City District's Emergency Operations Center. "Every division had a water team, making a total of seven water teams within the Corps.

They kind of separated it out so that every division had every type of team."

For instance, within the Northwestern Division, the Kansas City District had a water team, the Seattle District had an ice team, and Portland District had a power team. Flamm explained the teams would respond on a rotational basis with other divisions, meaning one team from one division would respond for 30 days, and then the next team from the next division on the list would take over for the next 30 days, and rotation between the divisions would occur until the job was complete.

"The Corps decided the process of turning over a mission every 30 days was too complicated," Flamm said. "So they decided to create two national water teams of the original seven and make the other five teams commodity teams. So, Corps-wide, there will be two national water teams, two national ice teams and 10 commodity teams."

The New England District makes up the other national water team, a job they are taking the lead on for 2006.

"What the Kansas City District's function is as a national water team is to order water on a national basis for an event and execute that entire mission from beginning to end," Flamm said. "This involves us getting the right amount of water to the right states. Once the water is received at the state level, then trucks will forward the water to a mobilization center in the state and then the mobilization center will forward the water to commodity teams further down range."

Formerly, the job of ordering water belonged to whichever district was the impacted district, and the Kansas City District would send a team out to help that impacted district.

John Skelton, Greg Huber and David Hoover (left to right) work with other districts out of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Deployable Tactical Operating System. *Photo by JoAnn Lucas*



Representatives from different federal and state agencies work together in the Emergency Operations Center for the state of Alabama. If the Kansas City District's National Water Planning and Response Team becomes activated, district employees would work out of the district's EOC on the first floor of the Richard Bolling Federal Building.

Photo by Jud Kneuvean



"It's our mission now," Flamm said. "We will get the money from FEMA. We have to pay the contractor. From start to finish, we have to resolve the tickets, and one of the best things about this new process is we can coordinate all of this from our home district."

Flamm said the district will still have one person, an action officer, travel to FEMA headquarters in Washington, D.C. and negotiate with FEMA and determine what is needed. The action officer will then pass the information along to the team in our Emergency Operations Center.

"When we are notified that we have a mission, we'll open our EOC, and our water team will work from here and execute the mission," Flamm said. "They will contact the contractor and issue the delivery orders and track things as they move along. Then, several of our people will be further down range at the mobilization center tracking the trucks coming in and making sure we've got all the paperwork in order."

Under the new plan, there will be a total of 33 people on the National Water PRT. Planning for three different rotations of teams at the mobilization site, there will be six people in each rotation, 13 people

will operate the EOC at home station and two will act as action officers at FEMA headquarters.

The National Water PRT will be stood up for any emergency or natural disaster within the territories of the United States. Hurricane season goes from June 1 through Nov. 30 and is expected to be a more active season than in 2005. This is one of the reasons why responsibility for standing up a National Water PRT will rotate every calendar year.

"The New England District outside of Boston is the other national water team, and they will be the primary national water team for 2006," Flamm said. "We wanted to make a switch that's not in the middle of hurricane season."

Flamm also said if the New England District is hit by a hurricane or other natural disaster, Kansas City District will take over and act as the National Water PRT.

"This year, when there is an event, we do expect to send several key members of our team to New

England to shadow them so we respond consistently from year to year," Flamm said. "I really like this new plan because although we'll have a longer-term mission with greater responsibility for accountability and commitment of resources, we're going to have greater flexibility to manage the resources because the mission will belong to us from beginning to end."



Greg Huber (right) and John Skelton of the Kansas City District receive shipments of bottled water during Hurricane Dennis. The water was received at a mobilization center and then forwarded to staging areas and distribution centers. *Photo by JoAnn Lucas*



KCCC

Kansas City Corporate Challenge

Drag Up

Kim Penner, Rusty Thomas, Diana McCoy, Mike Watkins, Carol Adams and Bev Stone (left to right), all board members for Kansas City Corporate Challenge pose with the sixth place trophy. The trophy will be on display on the seventh floor lobby of the Richard Bolling Federal Building after the awards ceremony. Not pictured are Lt. Col. Kelly Butler, Ben Davis, Scott Loehr, and Karen Turner. *Photo by Jennie Wilson*

The Kansas City District placed sixth in this year's Kansas City Corporate Challenge, the nation's oldest and largest corporate games.

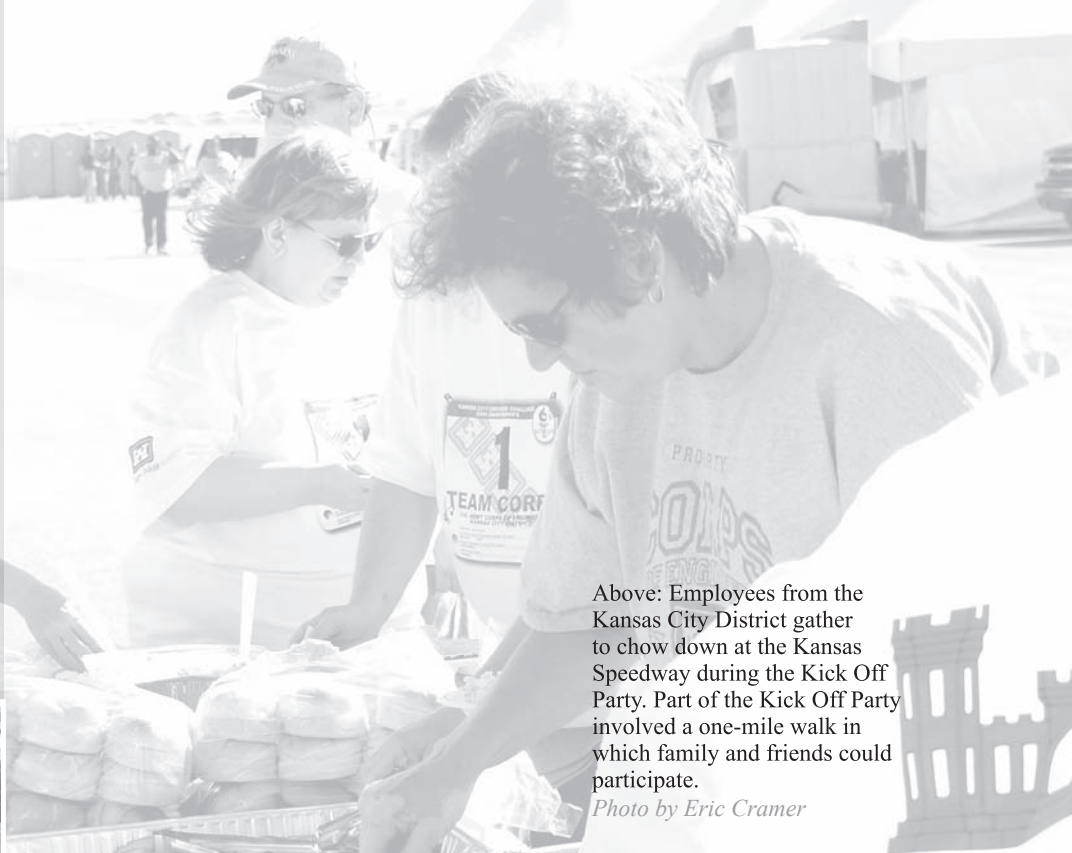
The season kicked off with a one-mile walk May 12 and ended with the Tug-of-War pull-off June 24. A total of 219 employees signed up to compete in the games, and the district scored a total of 493 points. Finishing ahead of the district in Division C was: GE Insurance Solutions with 806 points, HNTB Corporation with 637.5 points, Lockton Companies with 589.5 points, United States Marine Corps with 580.5 points and EPA with 517.5 points.

The district walked away with one gold medal, won by Al Gehrt for his trap shooting skills. Silver medals were won by: Angela Arneson and Scott Loehr for horseshoes; Larry Rhea for table tennis; and the Tug-of-War team which included Garth Anderson, Kevin Bishop, Kirk Boese, Bill Bolte, Beth Buckrucker, Mike Chirpich, Ben Davis, Steve Fischer, Maj. Matt Little, Josephine Newton-Lund and Kamala Powell. Bronze medals were won by Carol Adams for the bike race, Kevin Bond for the 50-yard butterfly and 100-yard individual medley in swimming, Vincenzo Crifasi and Greg Wilson for doubles tennis, Alice Edwards and Josephine Newton-Lund for doubles table tennis, Kent Myers for racquetball and Kim Penner for the 50-yard freestyle in swimming.

According to KCCC, their mission is to promote health, wellness and camaraderie by presenting participants with physical endeavors designed to challenge their bodies and minds through the spirit of corporate competition.



Diana McCoy, Angela Arneson, Lt. Col. Kelly Butler, Ben Davis and Adams Jones pose after the one-mile track event and one-mile medley relay for Kansas City Corporate Challenge. The fastest time for the Corps men was Maj. Matthew Little who scored five participation points. The fastest time for the women was Lt. Col. Kelly Butler who scored 10 division points and five medal points. *Photo by Randy McCoy*

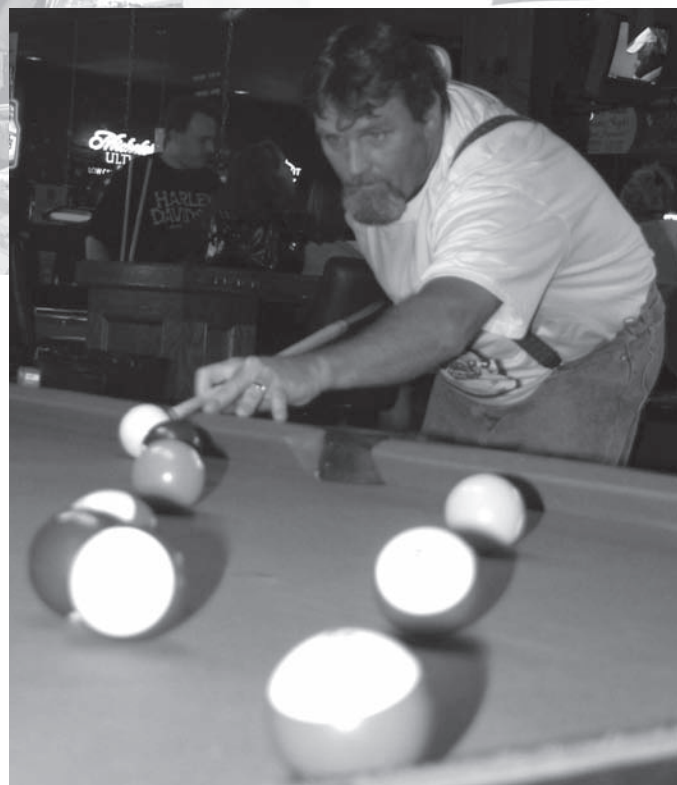


Above: Employees from the Kansas City District gather to chow down at the Kansas Speedway during the Kick Off Party. Part of the Kick Off Party involved a one-mile walk in which family and friends could participate.

Photo by Eric Cramer



Angela Arneson wins second place in Division C in women's horseshoes after playing her first game ever. The horseshoes event was held at McCoy Park in Independence, Mo. *Photo provided*



Above: Fred Wilkinson concentrates on a shot during the Pool Play at Side Pockets. Wilkinson competed for the men and Beverly Stone competed for the women. *Photo by Diana McCoy*



Left: Garth Anderson, Carol Adams, Ed Louis, Bill Edwards, Allen Tool, Ben Davis and Brian Rast (left to right) meet at the 5K held at Shawnee Mission Park May 13. The district team placed fifth out of 17 companies in Division C, with Lt. Col. Kelly Butler scoring the most meet points out of the 19 Corps participants. *Photo by Diana McCoy*

Smithville Lake

The Urban Playground

www.nwk.usace.army.mil/smithville/smithville_home.htm

Location of Dam: Smithville, Mo.
Stream/River: Little Platte River
Miles Above Mouth of River: 13.6
Storage Date: October 19, 1979
Total Acreage: 19,709 Acres
Lake Size: 7,190 Acres
Dam Length: 4,000 ft.
Yearly Visitation: 1.2 Million

This is the 15th lake to appear in a series which will outline Kansas City District's 18 lake projects. All projects will appear in chronological order from the date they first stored water.



Many residents who live in the nearby suburbs of Smithville store their sailboats in Sailboat Cove. Slips, moorings and dry sail facilities are available through the project's largest partner, Clay County Parks Department. *Photo by Diana McCoy*

By Diana McCoy

Humphrey Smith built a corn mill in Missouri in 1822 and people knew the area as "Smith's Mill." He had success with the mill for the next 31 years until he saw his dreams float away with the river during a flood.

It wasn't the first flood of the Little Platte River, nor would it be the last.

The area became a town and, in 1867, it was renamed "Smithville" and became a rural community. In 1965 the area experienced the worst flood in its history when 15 feet of water rushed through the town, washing away businesses and homes.

"That flood was the straw that broke the camel's back," said Bruce Clark, operations manager for the lake. "The dam had already been authorized, but the flood kind of set things in motion for construction to get started as quickly as it did."

Today, with protection from devastating floods after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed the dam in 1977, Smithville is a bustling urban community with a population of nearly 7,000.

"Flood control is the main mission here, like most of the lakes," Clark said. "And our second most important mission is water supply."

Clark said the area is growing very quickly—especially in the past 10 years. The lake, providing water to about 15,000 people, supplies two water treatment plants, one in Smithville and another in Plattsburg.

"We also have a six-foot diameter pipe that runs through the dam and was put there by the city of Kansas City," Clark said. "If Kansas City ever wants to take their water, they would build a treatment facility below the dam. The city is allocated nearly 10 feet of the pool which could drastically alter how the lake will be operated. Time will tell, but right now, it looks doubtful the city will ever exercise its option to take 'their' water."

Smithville Lake's other missions include fish and wildlife management and recreation.

"Our fish and wildlife management here is a little different in that we manage all the public hunting land and waterfowl refuge," Clark said. "The state has no involvement

with the project land due to a long history that started with the resident Canada geese." Clark said.

In the 1950s, the giant Canada goose was nearly extinct in the state of Missouri. The Missouri Department of Conservation decided to initiate a restoration program on the Trimble Wildlife Area which is now under Smithville



Volunteers offer their time during Day at the Lake. The event reintroduces summer recreational activities to individuals who have experienced a life-altering illness such as spinal cord injuries. Coordinated by the Rehabilitation Institute of Kansas City, it is held at Smithville Lake every year on the second Friday of July.

Photo by Diana McCoy

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Hillsdale Lake

Water Supplier to the Suburbs

www.nwk.usace.army.mil/hillsdale/hillsdale_home.htm

Location of Dam: Paola, Kan.
Stream/River: Big Bull Creek
Miles Above Mouth of River: 18.2
Storage Date: September 19, 1981
Total Acreage: 13,103 Acres
Lake Size: 4,580 Acres
Dam Length: 8,700 ft.
Yearly Visitation: 503,875

This is the 16th lake to appear in a series which will outline Kansas City District's 18 lake projects. All projects will appear in chronological order from the date they first stored water.

By *Diana McCoy*

Located in the Osage River Basin, Hillsdale Lake in Paola, Kan., plays a major role for many of the surrounding communities, providing water for thousands of people every day.

The water from Hillsdale, a 4,580-acre lake, reaches five rural water districts and the cities of Gardner and Spring Hill, Kan., providing 711,977 million gallons of water each year.

"More than 30,000 residents from northern Miami County and southern Johnson County use Hillsdale Lake for the purpose of drinking water," said Jim Bell, park ranger. "In fact, Miami County Rural Water District No. 2 is one of the largest rural water districts in the state."

Bell said as the area rapidly continues to grow, water supply will become an even bigger concern.

"We have the same issue here at Hillsdale as with Clinton Lake," said Lew Ruona, operations manager at both Hillsdale and Clinton Lakes. "At Clinton Lake, water supply will be one of the main focuses in the future because the area is growing so quickly without increasing the number of water resources, and the same is true for Hillsdale."

Developers have come into the communities surrounding Hillsdale Lake with plans to build subdivisions and turn the small towns into little cities.

None of the cities would be possible, though, without the existence of the lake, which was built for flood protection along the Marais des Cygnes River. It also provides flood protection on the Osage and Missouri Rivers and works in conjunction with Pomona and Melvern Lakes.

"The water in Hillsdale Lake has historically

contained higher than desirable levels of phosphorus," Bell said, "so to improve the quality of the water, the corps has worked with local agencies to implement conservation efforts such as wetlands, native grass plantings and terraces."

To fulfill the mission of fish and wildlife management, many of the trees were left standing when the lake was filled, which contributes to the reason why fisherman like Hillsdale Lake, Bell said.

"We have excellent crappie fishing here," Ruona said, "and the state has a huge walleye stocking program."

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks takes two weeks every spring to round up the spawning females in the lake, gather the eggs and send them to Milford Lake to hatch. After hatching, the young walleye are distributed around to different lakes around Kansas.

Bell said the lake isn't the state record holder for any fish, but fishing tournaments are a popular activity at Hillsdale.

"Last year there were privately sponsored bass fishing tournaments every Wednesday night," Bell said. "In September there will be a family fishing tournament conducted by the Hillsdale Water Quality Group, called Fish for the Lake."

Another popular activity is the 30-mile Saddle Ridge equestrian trail and campground. *continued on page 14*

These walnuts come from a tree planted on Earth Day in 1989 by the students of Hillsdale Elementary School. The event takes place every year since 1987 and is organized by Jim Bell, park ranger.

Photo by Diana McCoy



An area close to the new marina at Hillsdale Lake offers a place for visitors to temporarily "park" their jet skis. The marina, completed in April 2005, is a popular place for visitors. *Photo by Diana McCoy*

LTG STROCK

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of Civil Engineers to investigate the performance of the New Orleans hurricane system during Hurricane Katrina. That performance was but one of the many contributing factors in the tragic loss of life and property but a very important one. Over time we and others will explore the other factors but because the Corps is accountable and responsible to the American people for the projects we build, we had an immediate need to understand what went wrong and then make the appropriate fixes.

With the benefit of hindsight and information gained from the ongoing analysis of the IPET, we can now look back and say that there were aspects of the New Orleans system that could have – and perhaps should have – been considered differently in its design, construction, and operation over the past 40 years. As a result, the extensive series of levees and floodwalls that were built by the Corps and various levee districts did not perform as an integrated hurricane protection system. Instead, these facilities performed as a series of discrete projects, with 50 breaches occurring during the storm. For more information, I refer you to our website at <http://www.usace.army.mil>. It contains links to the transcripts from the June 1st press conference in New Orleans. It includes my remarks about our repair and reconstruction efforts, a statement by the IPET director and a question and answer session with the media. I understand the frustration many of you feel from negative or incorrect information about the Corps and our work. Don't be discouraged. Your work - not words – will shine through in the end. We will continue to address misinformation quickly and factually, and we will keep people informed as we proceed with our work.

I also look forward to working with you as we craft our institutional response to this terrible disaster. We will capture the many positive and negative lessons learned and reflect on how we need to change as an organization to ensure we retain our reputation as relevant, ready, responsive, and reliable.

Let me conclude by saying that I end every day with a strong sense of pride, confidence and satisfaction in our team. You have been stressed and stretched, yet you continue to do a remarkable job in meeting all of our missions. Once again we are in hurricane season, and work continues in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is a high likelihood that you will again be asked to volunteer to serve in some fashion and I am confident that you will stand ready. Selfless service is the hallmark of the Corps.

ESSAYONS!

Carl Strock

Relevant, Ready, Responsive, Reliable

SMITHVILLE LAKE

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Lake's pool. As the MDC started getting successful hatches of geese, they would distribute the goslings to different areas throughout the state.

When the Smithville Lake project was authorized, it meant flooding the Trimble Wildlife Area, which caused the state to file a law suit against the Corps.

"The Corps always offers a project's wildlife lands to the state for management," Clark said. "But with the MDC being in a law suit with the Corps, they didn't want to have anything to do with taking the land, in order to have a good case against us in court. They wanted to say the Corps destroyed the Trimble Wildlife Area and it would never be what it used to be. So, bottom line, they elected not to take wildlife management on any of this land."

The Corps plays a major role in management of all wildlife lands but a minimal role in recreation management.

"This project has tremendous public hunting pressure due to our location to the large metro population," Clark said. "This makes it important for us to do a quality job managing the wildlife areas, which we attempt to do."

Smithville Lake is a cost share project, due to Public Law 89-72, so the recreation aspect is managed by sponsors.

"Clay County Parks Department and the cities of Smithville and Plattsburg are our recreation sponsors," Clark said. "The county has the three large parks on the lake and both cities operate a park, one on each end of the lake."

Clark added that the partners have done an outstanding job in developing great recreation facilities—some of which are unique to most Corps projects.

"For example, we have a trap shooting range here that's world class. It's a tremendous facility. People from across the United States come here to compete during national shoots," Clark said. "We also have a 36-hole golf course, an equestrian trail and more than 20 miles of paved trails. And besides that, we always have events taking place out here—some inside the parks, and some outside the parks."

The project's annual eagle day event draws an average of 2,000 people out to the lake, so the staff takes a "multi-agency approach" to getting the job done so visitors benefit.

Other events include the handicapped hunts and youth hunts, a Fourth of July fireworks show, Day at the Lake which allows physically challenged people the opportunity to "play" at the lake and other events the district holds at the lake throughout the year.

"The district likes to utilize Smithville due to our proximity," Clark said. "We host the New Employee Orientation Tour,

as well as the annual motorboat operator licensing training here and other classes and meetings. Our visitor center comes in handy for the training classes because we have a 55-seat theater here which other agencies like to utilize when it's available."

Clark explained that Smithville Lake is big in activity because of its proximity to Kansas City and referred to the project as more of an "urban" reservoir.

"As Kansas City has expanded north, we have become more and more popular," Clark said. "The day-use activity at Smithville Lake is great as we are not so much of a 'destination park' as are other lakes in the district. People who live here buy their first jet skis or play a round of golf after work. They get off at five o'clock and are on the lake by six o'clock. Smithville Lake really is a place to play."

HILLSDALE LAKE

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"There are usually about 4-6 major rides every year," Bell said. "We have a large number of horseback clientele that come out to use the trail every week."

During hunting season, Bell said visitors are eager to take advantage of the hunting opportunities the lake offers.

"We have more than 8,000 acres of land which is open to public hunting," Bell said. "People like to hunt deer, turkey, doves, quail, squirrels, rabbits and waterfowl, and we continually work towards making the land the perfect habitat for these animals."

One of the activities which help this process is the tree plantings which Bell organizes every year on Earth Day, the last Friday in April.

"I've organized the planting of trees now for the past 19 years with the help of the students from Hillsdale Elementary School," Bell said. "We plant from 500 to 1,000 trees each year, and since 1987, we've planted more than 17,000 trees."

Bell said the trees are planted in different areas throughout the 8,000 acres of project land where the Corps wants to improve the wildlife habitat and that many of the trees are "wildlife friendly."

This is one of the few things Bell and other Corps employees can do to improve the project not only for the animals, but for the visitors as well.

"We are a cost-share lake," Ruona said. "When we were first built, we only had a few boat ramps because we needed a cost-share partner, according to federal law, in order to develop the project in any way."

Hillsdale Lake acquired its partner, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, in 1989, eight years after it was built.

"When KDWP came in, they were able to build campgrounds and the swimming beach and develop the area so that it attracted more visitors," Bell said. "Now we have more than half a million visitors each year."

LTG Carl A. Strock



Corps Team,

I know that many of you have been concerned that I have been relatively silent concerning our role in responding to the tragic hurricanes along the Gulf coast. I felt it was important that we wait for a complete, thorough, and peer-reviewed analysis before responding. Many “experts” drew immediate conclusions in the days following the flooding of New Orleans but I knew that a rigorous analysis would be necessary to fully understand why the system performed as it did. It was essential that we have right answers, not just quick answers, because we had to incorporate the results into our restoration and repair mission. Because I did not want to prejudice the analysis in any way I remained silent on the possible causes – and it was especially difficult when the Corps was subjected to harsh criticism for the quality of our work and our methods. Now that the analysis is largely complete I don’t want any more time to lapse without reflecting on the results. But first let me thank you for your tremendous contributions in support of hurricane response and recovery over the last year. Thanks to our great team, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers answered the Call to Duty. We met an important commitment to New Orleans to restore the hurricane protection system by June 1st, the beginning of hurricane season. At the same time, we accomplished many other critical missions over the 90,000-square mile impacted area in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.

It was immensely gratifying to see how quickly we can redirect our energy when necessary and still continue to meet the other demands of our many missions. Last August, the Corps’ number one priority was supporting the Global War on Terrorism, and we thought we had a full plate with the work we were doing in Afghanistan and Iraq. Then Hurricane Katrina hit and, almost overnight, we assumed responsibility for a multi-billion dollar mission. Thousands of you voluntarily deployed immediately. Ultimately, more than 8,000 Corps employees and retirees served in the Gulf Coast recovery effort.

Much praise also belongs to all of you who remained at your normal duty locations. You performed your regularly assigned duties and also accomplished the

critical work of those who deployed to the Gulf Coast, Iraq or Afghanistan. We cannot meet our many ongoing missions for the nation without people like you who are willing to step forward to shoulder the extra load in times of need.

The agility, commitment and competence of our workforce allowed us to meet the three-fold effort along the Gulf Coast. First was our support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. We provided water, ice, emergency power and temporary roofs and housing. We assessed damages to public buildings and facilities. And we began the largest debris removal mission in U.S. history in terms of cubic yards and area. Given the immensity of the disaster we drew considerable support from other Federal agencies, notably the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, and the United States Navy. Second, we provided personnel augmentation to the Department of Defense in support of the military efforts in the area.

Third, and most visibly, we addressed our responsibilities related to our flood damage reduction and navigation missions. We worked closely with industry and other government agencies to re-open vital waterborne commercial arteries for access to New Orleans, our nation’s largest agricultural port. We unwatered New Orleans – a Herculean task. And thanks to an around-the-clock effort, we repaired over 200 miles of a 350-mile levee system, including moving 5.5 million cubic yards of earth to re-build those levees. The system is equal to or better than it was before the hurricane struck, and in the months and years ahead, with generous supplemental appropriations from Congress, we will continue to upgrade flood and storm damage reduction projects in coastal Louisiana to meet goals set for 2007 and 2010. We have also been asked to make recommendations on how to provide even higher levels of protection in the more distant future.

While urgent repairs were underway, I commissioned the Interagency Performance Evaluation Task Force (IPET), with peer review by the American Society

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KANSAS CITY DISTRICT U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS RETIREES CLUB

Dear Retiree,

Yes, that is your new title! You have joined a select group of people who have served with distinction as a member of a select organization, the Kansas City District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Now it is time to relax, pursue personal interests, and begin to enjoy life without the distractions associated with a full time job! It is difficult to just one day sever all connections with your past and let friends and co-workers with whom you have mutual interests disappear from your life forever.

You don't have to do that. There is a way to maintain contact and meet with many of your friends and associates who have retired before you. Simply join the Kansas City District's Retirees Club and become an active member!

The Club meets four times a year at an informal luncheon where we catch up on what each other is doing...maybe even hear a few tall tales! Sometimes we schedule special activities, and we always have a good time!

Our membership numbers around 200, give or take a few. We have a full slate of officers to help keep everything organized. Our dues are \$3 a year or \$10 for four years. That will insure you are placed on our mailing list to receive the membership roster and our quarterly newsletter and are aware of our planned activities.

Please take the time to fill out the form below, detach and mail it along with your check made out to the Kansas City District's Retirees Club, and join us for a million memories and great fellowship! Mail your form and check to: Doris Durst, 402 N. River, Independence, MO 64050.

YES, I WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER OF
THE KANSAS CITY DISTRICT'S RETIREES CLUB

Enclosed is my check for: _____ \$3.00 for one year _____ \$10.00 for four years

Retiree's Name

Spouse's Name

Address

Phone Number with Area Code



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